History

Progression of skills and knowledge

Subject Definitions

Reception:
History is not usually taught as a separate, rigid subject but is embedded within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, primarily under the area of learning known as "Understanding the World".

KS1 definition:
History is learning about the past.

KS2 definition:
History is learning about past events, people and places using the evidence from the past.

Note: pre history is the period of time before written records began

Yearly Overview of Units

Year Group	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
EYFS	Myself and my Family	Different Homes/Festivals around the World	Changing Seasons	Old toys and Games/Pirates	The Seaside	Shakespeare and Dinosaurs
Year 1	Toys Past and Present		Adventurous Explorers		Castles	
Year 2		The Great Fire of London		Mary Seacole and George Mottershead		Seaside holidays in the past
Year 3		Stone Age to Iron Age		Invaders & Settlers: Romans		Ancient Egypt
Year 4		Anglo Saxons, Picts and Scots		Mayan Civilisation		Chester Cathedral: A Local History Study
Year 5		Shang Dynasty	Anglo Saxons and Vikings		Who are the Greeks?	
Year 6	World War Two	Atlantic Slave Trade			Crime and Punishment through the ages	

Skills Overview

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2
Chronological Understanding	Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class *(ELG: Understanding the World)* Use past tense (e.g. When I was younger/When I was a baby) to describe themselves.	Sequence events in their own life Sequence 3 or 4 artefacts from different periods of time	Use the words past and present when describing an event Describe events that have happened in the past Using my learning, sequence artefacts from time periods that are closer together Recount changes, in sequence, in my own life over time
Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past	Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society *(ELG: Understanding the World)*	Recounts sections of stories and facts from the past (before living memory) Begin to explain why people in the past acted as they did	Identify differences between ways of life at different times in the past Explain why people in the past acted as they did and begin to explain what happened as a result Explain the main events from a significant event in history (or about a significant person)
Historical Enquiry	Understand the past through books read in class and storytelling *(ELG: Understanding the World)*	Identify different ways in which the past is represented e.g. photographs, artefacts, reports Ask questions about the artefacts e.g. what were people doing? Which things are old and new?	Ask and answer simple questions about the past using different sources of evidence and artefacts Explain different ways in which the past is represented
Historical Interpretation	Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling *(ELG: Understanding the World)*	Look at, and use, stories, books, photographs, pictures and artefacts to find out about the past	Look at, and compare, books and pictures, stories, accounts, pictures, photographs, artefacts and buildings. Use these to find out about the past Begin to discuss the reliability of photos/accounts and stories

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Chronological Understanding	Place the events of the time studied on a time line and introduce the terms BC/AD Sequence significant events, dates or artefacts from periods studied	Understand that a timeline can be divided into BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini) Order significant events and dates on a timeline. Describe the main changes in a period in history	Know and sequence key events of time studied and compare to previous learning (e.g. knowing where events are in relation to each other)	Place current study on time line in relation to other studies
Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past	Use evidence to describe the culture and leisure activities from the past; clothes and way of life and actions of different groups of people Use evidence to describe buildings and their uses of people from the past	Use evidence to describe what was important to people from the past. Use evidence to show how the lives of rich and poor from the past differed. Describe similarities and differences between people, events and artefacts Describe how some of the things I have studied from the past affect/influence life today	Give own reasons why changes may have occurred, backed up by evidence. Describe similarities and differences between some people, events and artefacts studied Describe how historical events studied affect/influence life today. Make links between some of the features of past societies e.g. democracy	Give reasons why changes may have occurred, backed up by evidence. Describe similarities and differences between people, events and artefacts Describe how some of the things studied from the past affect/influence life today. Make links between some of the features of past societies.
Historical Enquiry	Use documents, printed sources the internet, photographs, music, artefacts, historic buildings, visits to museums and galleries and visits to sites as evidence about the past. Ask questions and find answers about the past.	Use documents (as y3) to collect evidence about the past and choose which to use to answer questions Begin to identify if a source is reliable/unreliable. Ask questions and find answers about the past.	Use documents and sources (as previous years) Choose reliable sources of evidence to answer questions, realising that there is often not a single answer to historical questions. Investigate own lines of enquiry by posing questions to answer.	Use documents and sources (as previous years). Choose reliable sources of evidence to answer questions and compare.
Historical Interpretation	Look at representations of the period – museum, cartoons etc Explore the idea that there are different accounts of history.	Look at different versions of the same event in history and identify differences. Know that people in the past represent events or ideas in a	Understand that some evidence from the past is propaganda, opinion or misinformation, and that this affects	Consider how to check accuracy and differing views. Investigate own lines of enquiry as y5

		way that persuades others.	interpretations of history and give reasons why there may be different accounts of history.	

Reception

Children will learn historical skills, knowledge and vocabulary through a range of daily experiences, interactions, continuous provision, explicit teaching and enrichment activities. Topics will be used to enhance and support learning.

The topics are subject to change for a range of reasons such as pupils' interests and current events. Where topics change, children will still work towards securing their Early Learning Goals through similar activities and skills. They will communicate their knowledge through:

- Drawing pictures, writing, drama/role play, making models
- Tell stories about the past orally
- Sort events or objects into groups (e.g. then and now)

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Use simple language such as **before, after, now, long ago, old, new, yesterday**.
  Sequence familiar events (baby → toddler → now).
  Understand that grandparents were children in the past.
- Say how life was different in the past:
  "Old toys didn't need batteries."
  "People used to travel by steam train."
- Notice what is the same:
  "Children still go to school."
- Ask questions about old objects or photos:
  "What is this?"
  "Why did they use that?"
- Look closely at artefacts, images, and stories.

Skills Across the Year:

Early Learning Goal: Understanding the World

Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.

Use past tense (e.g. When I was younger/When I was a baby) to describe themselves.

Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society.

Understand the past through books read in class and storytelling.

Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

Knowledge:

Au1: Personal history including discussions and conversations about children's previous setting and their place in their new school

Au 2: Different types of homes in different locations

Sp1: Changing seasons and differences in the weather

Sp2: Different families

Su1: The Seaside; similarities and differences then and now.

Su2: Portraits, what can they tell us about the past? How do we know about dinosaurs? Life on Earth before people, extinction, the work of Mary Anning

Key Vocabulary:

Time and Chronology	Now, today, yesterday, tomorrow Then, next, later Before, after Long ago, in the past Before I was born
Growing and Changing	Baby, toddler, child, adult, old, young Change, grow When (parents or grandparents) were little
Family and Community	Mum, Dad, auntie, uncle, cousin etc Different jobs in the community and beyond
Stories and Enquiry	Old, new Story, picture, photograph Same, different, compare

Year 1

Skills Across the Year:

Sequence events in their own life
Sequence 3 or 4 artefacts from different periods of time
Recounts sections of stories and facts from the past (before living memory)
Begin to explain why people in the past acted as they did
Identify different ways in which the past is represented e.g. photographs, artefacts, reports
Ask questions about the artefacts e.g. what were people doing? Which things are old and new?
Look at, and use, stories, books, photographs, pictures and artefacts to find out about the past

Knowledge:

Autumn (Toys Past and Present)
Toys have changed over time as new materials have been invented. Some examples of old toys are Yo-yos, action figures and a GameBoy. Technology, safety and materials have changed toys. My grandparents and parents played with different toys to me.

Spring (Adventurous Explorers)
Christopher Columbus was an explorer who lived hundreds of years ago. He wanted to find a quicker way from Europe to Asia. He was given money to set sail to explore different places to find gold, silk and spices. Neil Armstrong was an American astronaut and the first person to land on the moon. Tim Peake is a British astronaut and was the first British astronaut to go on the International Space Station. Sophia Danenberg became the first African American and first black woman to climb to the summit of Mount Everest.

Summer (Castles)
Castles are very old buildings from a long time ago. Many castles were built about 1,000 years ago, in Norman times. Castles were built to keep people safe from enemies. Lots of people such as kings, queens, knights and cooks lived and worked in castles. Chester Castle was built a long time ago. *(put image on Knowledge Organiser. Lesson 2 make sure you include Chester Castle).*

Key Vocabulary:

invented	Made or created for the first time
technology	Things that people make or use to help them solve problems
sequence	The order that things happen, from first to last
past	The time that has already happened
present	The time that is happening now
explore	To travel around and find out more about a place.
medieval	The middle ages was a time that happened long, long ago.
rebellion	When people say **no** to a leader and try to change things together.

monarch	A ruler of a country, usually a king or queen.
monarchy	A type of government where a country is ruled by one person, such as a king or queen
Normans	A group of settlers who invaded England a long time ago.

Year 2

Skills and Across the Year:

Use the words past and present when describing an event
Describe events that have happened in the past
Using my learning, sequence artefacts from time periods that are closer together
Recount changes, in sequence, in my own life over time
Identify differences between ways of life at different times in the past
Explain why people in the past acted as they did and begin to explain what happened as a result
Explain the main events from a significant event in history (or about a significant person)
Ask and answer simple questions about the past using different sources of evidence and artefacts
Explain different ways in which the past is represented
Look at, and compare, books and pictures, stories, accounts, pictures, photographs, artefacts and buildings. Use these to find out about the past
Begin to discuss the reliability of photos/accounts and stories

Knowledge:

Autumn (The Great Fire of London)
The Great Fire of London started on 2nd September 1666. This was a long time ago. The fire spread quickly because the houses were close together, it was dry and London had strong winds. The Mayor didn't pull down houses quickly so the fire spread quicker. Samuel Pepys lived in London and wrote a diary. After the fire, new rules and equipment were used.

Spring (Mary Seacole and George Mottershead)
Mary Seacole lived around 200 years ago. She helped sick soldiers in a war. She learned how to care for people from her mother. People called her a brave nurse. She is remembered because she helped people. George Mottershead was the founder of Chester Zoo. He wanted to open a zoo to let animals live in open spaces (not behind bars). The first animals in the zoo were monkeys and a polar bear. People who lived near the zoo were not happy because they thought the animals could escape and make lots of noise. Over time, the zoo has got bigger and has lots more animals. It also employs lots of people.

Summer (Seaside holidays in the past)
A long time ago, people wore different clothes at the seaside. Families used to travel by train or horse to get to the beach. People played with paddling pools, buckets, and spades instead of modern toys. They stayed in guest houses or small hotels, not big seaside resorts. People went to the seaside to have fun and relax, just like today.

Key Vocabulary:

account	A report or description of an event.
chronological order	Time order—things that happened in the past to now.
hand pump	An object to squirt water onto a fire.

source	Something that tells us information about the past.
soldier	A person who fights in an army.
Jamaica	Where Mary Seacole was born
Crimea	Where the war took place
cholera	A disease common in the past
founder	Someone who starts something new.
employs	Pays someone to do the work.
resort	A place where people go on holiday to relax and have fun.

Year 3

Skills Across the Year:

Place the events of the time studied on a time line and introduce the terms BC/AD
Sequence significant events, dates or artefacts from periods studied
Use evidence to describe the culture and leisure activities from the past; clothes and way of life and actions of different groups of people
Use evidence to describe buildings and their uses of people from the past
Use documents, printed sources, the internet, photographs, music, artefacts, historic buildings, visits to museums and galleries and visits to sites as evidence about the past.
Ask questions and find answers about the past.
Look at representations of the period – museum, cartoons etc
Explore the idea that there are different accounts of history.

Knowledge:

Autumn (Stone Age to Iron Age)
Prehistory is split into 3 periods of time: Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. There were different types of homes in prehistoric Britain. These were changed when people had stronger materials. People used to hunt for food, make tools and clothes. The place Skara Brae tells us how people used to live in the past.

Spring (Invaders & Settlers: Romans)
Romans invaded Britain in 43AD. The Romans wanted to take Britain's riches, land, slaves and natural resources. The Romans settled in Chester because it was in a central location and had a river. Boudica was the Queen of the Iceni tribe. They fought against the Roman Empire. They left legacies such as new towns, roads, aqueducts and new ways of reading and counting.

Summer (Ancient Egypt)
The Ancient Egyptian era started in 3,100BC and ended in 332BC. They believed in different Gods and Goddesses. The Pharaohs were very important and were mummified and buried in tombs. The River Nile was important for trade, farming and water. The Ancient Egyptians left legacies including maths, paper and the alphabet.

Key Vocabulary:

period of time	The length of time something happened.
timeline	A way of organising information in chronological (time) order.
AD/BC	How we record dates on a timeline. AD is Anno Domini.
prehistory	Before written records began.
ancient	Belonging to the very distant past
archaeologist	A person who studies history through the excavation of sites and use of artefacts
natural resources	Useful things that come from nature, such as wood, water, stone and metal.

civilisation	People living together with rules and leaders.
mummification	A process to preserve a dead body
pyramid	Ancient masonry structure
hieroglyphics	Writing consisting of symbols
artefacts	An object made by a human being, and of cultural or historical interest

Year 4

Skills Across the Year:

Understand that a timeline can be divided into BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini)
Order significant events and dates on a timeline.
Describe the main changes in a period in history
Use evidence to describe what was important to people from the past.
Use evidence to show how the lives of rich and poor from the past differed.
Describe similarities and differences between people, events and artefacts
Describe how some of the things I have studied from the past affect/influence life today
Use documents (as y3) to collect evidence about the past and choose which to use to answer questions
Begin to identify if a source is reliable/unreliable.
Ask questions and find answers about the past.
Look at different versions of the same event in history and identify differences.
Know that people in the past represent events or ideas in a way that persuades others.

Knowledge:

Autumn (Anglo Saxons, Picts and Scots)
The Anglo Saxons were a group of people who settled in England after the Romans. They wanted to settle in England because of the climate, good farming land, and trading routes. Anglo Saxons villages were small and built with natural resources (what they could find). Monks travelled to Anglo-Saxon villages to teach about Christianity. Sutton Hoo is where an impression of a Saxon burial ship was buried and many artefacts have been discovered.

Spring (Mayan Civilisation)
The Maya lived in Central America in places that are now Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. They were skilled farmers, growing crops like maize, beans, and squash using clever methods like irrigation. The Maya built cities with pyramids, temples, and palaces, including famous sites such as Chichen Itza and Tikal. They had a writing system called hieroglyphs and were experts in astronomy and maths. Religion was very important to the Maya.

Summer (Chester Cathedral: A Local History Study)
Chester Cathedral started as a Saxon church and was rebuilt by the Normans. The cathedral was changed and improved in medieval times, including towers, stained glass, and carvings. People used Chester Cathedral for religion, worship, and community events in the past and today. The architecture of the cathedral (arches, towers, windows) shows how people built and decorated important buildings. Chester Cathedral is important locally and nationally because it has history, religion, and architecture from over 1,000 years ago. It is a Grade I listed building.

Key Vocabulary:

settle	To make a place your home and live there.
migrate	To move from one place to another to live.
monk	A man who lives a religious life and worships God.
natural resources	Useful things that come from nature, such as wood, water, stone and metal.
artefacts	An object made by a human being, and of cultural or historical interest
irrigation	Artificially adding water to land or soil to help grow crops.
hieroglyphs	A formal ancient writing system.
civilisation	People living together with rules and leaders.
astronomy	The study of planets, stars and galaxies.
cathedral	A large and important Christian church.
architecture	The design and style of buildings
medieval	A time in history around 1,000 years ago
heritage	Important history from the past that we protect and remember.

Year 5

Skills Across the Year:

Know and sequence key events of time studied and compare to previous learning (e.g. knowing where events are in relation to each other)
Give own reasons why changes may have occurred, backed up by evidence.
Describe similarities and differences between some people, events and artefacts studied
Describe how historical events studied affect/influence life today.
Make links between some of the features of past societies e.g. democracy
Use documents and sources (as previous years)
Choose reliable sources of evidence to answer questions, realising that there is often not a single answer to historical questions.
Investigate own lines of enquiry by posing questions to answer.
Understand that some evidence from the past is propaganda, opinion or misinformation, and that this affects interpretations of history and give reasons why there may be different accounts of history.

Knowledge:

Autumn (Shang Dynasty)
The Shang Dynasty was one of the first recorded Chinese dynasties, ruling around 1600–1046 BC. The Shang ruled from cities with strong walls, where kings and nobles lived in palaces. They were skilled farmers, growing wheat and rice. They also raised animals. The Shang made bronze tools, weapons, and ritual vessels. They developed writing on oracle bones, which was used for religious ceremonies and recording history. Religion was important and the Shang worshipped ancestors and many gods, believing they could affect life on Earth.

Spring (Anglo Saxons and Vikings)
The Anglo-Saxons came from Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands after the Romans left and set up villages, farms, and kingdoms in England. The Vikings came from Scandinavia and raided, traded, and settled in parts of England from around 700–800 AD. Viking raids changed Anglo-Saxon life, leading to stronger defences, new towns, and more trade. Over time, Vikings settled peacefully, adopting Anglo-Saxon laws, Christianity, and culture, which influenced daily life. The arrival of the Vikings and Anglo-Saxons shaped England's language, place names, laws, and communities, leaving a lasting impact.

Summer (Who were The Greeks?)
The Ancient Greek era was 1,200BC-146BC. The Ancient Greeks lived in Greece and the Greek islands. There are many archaeological sites that have objects and tell us about the civilisation of Ancient Greece. Ancient Greece was not a country but was made up of city states. The Ancient Greeks thought that Gods and Goddesses watched over them and lived in palaces in the clouds. The Olympic Games started in Olympia over 2,000 years ago and were held in honour of Zeus, the King of the Gods. The language we use today is based on the Greek one. Citizens would meet together to decide city laws and a jury of 500 people would decide if someone was guilty.

Key Vocabulary:

raid	A sudden attack on a place, often to steal goods or valuables.

settlement	A place where a group of people establish a community and live.
Danelaw	The area of England that came under Viking control.
legacy	Something left behind from the past that continues to influence life today.
ancient	Something from a very long time ago.
civilisation	A group of people living together with laws, culture, and cities
city-state	A city that has its own government and rules (e.g. Athens or Sparta)
democracy	A system where people vote to make decisions (started in Athens)
citizen	A person who belongs to a city-state and can take part in decisions
slave	A person owned by someone else with no freedom
dynasty	A family of rulers who rule over a period of time.
bronze	A strong metal made from copper and tin.
oracle bones	Bones used to ask questions about the future.
ritual	Actions carried out as part of a ceremony.
ancestor	A family member who lived long ago.

Year 6

Skills Across the Year:

Place current study on timeline in relation to other studies
Give reasons why changes may have occurred, backed up by evidence.
Describe similarities and differences between people, events and artefacts
Describe how some of the things studied from the past affect/influence life today.
Make links between some of the features of past societies.
Use documents and sources (as previous years).
Choose reliable sources of evidence to answer questions and compare.
Consider how to check accuracy and differing views.
Investigate own lines of enquiry as y5

Knowledge:

Autumn (World War Two)
A war is when countries or large groups of people fight each other using weapons. World War Two began in 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. Britain, led by Winston Churchill, fought alongside the Allies against Germany, led by Adolf Hitler. Many children were evacuated from cities to the countryside to keep them safe from bombing. Some children from Liverpool and Manchester were evacuated to Chester. The Blitz caused widespread destruction across Britain and changed the daily lives of many people. Rationing limited the amount of food and other essential goods people could buy so that everyone received a fair share. The Holocaust caused enormous human suffering and is remembered so that we learn from the past.

Autumn (Atlantic Slave Trade)
The Atlantic Slave Trade lasted from the 16th to the 19th century and involved the capture, transport, and sale of millions of African people. Enslaved people were taken from West Africa and transported to the Americas and the Caribbean to work on plantations. The Middle Passage was the dangerous sea journey across the Atlantic, where many enslaved people suffered or died. Enslaved Africans worked on sugar, tobacco, and cotton plantations, often in terrible conditions with little freedom. Britain was heavily involved, with ports like Liverpool, Bristol, and London profiting from the trade. The abolition movement fought to end slavery, leading to the Slave Trade Act 1807, which made it illegal to trade enslaved people in the British Empire. Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad helped slaves escape to freedom.

Summer (Crime & Punishment through the ages)
Crime and Punishment changed over time; what was a crime in the past might be different today. In Roman times, criminals could be punished with fines, slavery, or execution, and the army often enforced the law. In Anglo-Saxon and medieval times, crimes like theft could lead to fines, floggings, or even execution. During the Tudor and Stuart periods, punishments became harsher, with public hangings and whipping to warn others. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Britain used transportation to Australia and built prisons to reform criminals instead of only punishing them. Changes in crime and punishment reflect society's values, technology and understanding of justice.

Key Vocabulary:

evacuation	When children were moved from cities to the countryside to keep them safe from bombing during the war
propaganda	Information, posters or films used to persuade people to think or act in a certain way, often to support the war effort
the Blitz	A period when German forces bombed British cities heavily, especially London, during World War 2
rationing	System where people were given limited amounts of food and goods because supplies were scarce during the war
treason	The crime of betraying your country or ruler, often seen as one of the most serious offences in history.
deterrent	Something intended to discourage people from committing a crime.
reform	To change someone's behaviour so they are less likely to commit another crime.
capital punishment	The death penalty, used in the past as a punishment for very serious crimes
slavery	Forcing people to work without freedom or pay
Middle Passage	The sea journey transporting enslaved Africans to the Americas
plantation	A large farm where crops were grown using enslaved labour
abolition	The act of ending slavery or the slave trade
legacy	A lasting impact left by the past.
punishment	A consequence given to someone who has committed a crime.
justice	The idea of treating people fairly according to the law.

Whole School Themes

Power and Leadership	**Settlement and Place**
Reception – Mary Anning – what did she discover? Who is the King? Year 1—Important people chose where to explore. Kings and Queens ruled from castles. Year 2— Great Fire of London—look at who was the king at the time. Did anyone have power that they didn't use (The Mayor)? Mary Seacole used her power to help people. Year 3— How did the Romans rule and what influence did they have on the culture? Ancient Greeks—who and how was it governed? Beliefs and rulers in Ancient Egyptian times. Year 4— How was Anglo-Saxon society organised? What was the importance of religion? What is the importance and power of the Church through the development of Chester Cathedral? Year 5— The Ancient Greeks thought that Gods and Goddesses watched over them and lived in palaces in the clouds. Year 6— Leaders of the countries involved in WW2.	Reception— Where do I live? What is the place around my school like? Year 1— People currently don't live on the moon but do stay for some time on the space station. Why is it hard to live in space? Castles were built to keep people safe after they settled there. Why did someone build a castle in that location? Year 2— Families used to travel by train or horse to get to the beach. Transport has changed over time. Seaside towns have changed over time and are different places now to the past. Year 3— Why did the Romans choose Chester as a location to settle? Year 4— The Anglo Saxons were a group of people who settled in England after the Romans. Link to geography unit in the summer term about settlements. Year 5— Anglo Saxons and Vikings settled in the UK for a range of reasons. They moved from place to place and influenced the UK because of this. Year 6— People settling linking to the slave trade. How did Harriet Tuubman help people in different places?

Thread 1: Power and Leadership
Who was important, who made decisions, and how they helped or protected people.

Thread 2: Settlement and Place in History
Where people lived, worked, and played, and how places changed over time.
In KS1, pupils notice these ideas.
In KS2, pupils explain and analyse them.